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—VOCATIONAL EDUCATION—

A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

PUBLIC HEARING
1986

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MONTANA COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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MONTANA COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1986 — 1987

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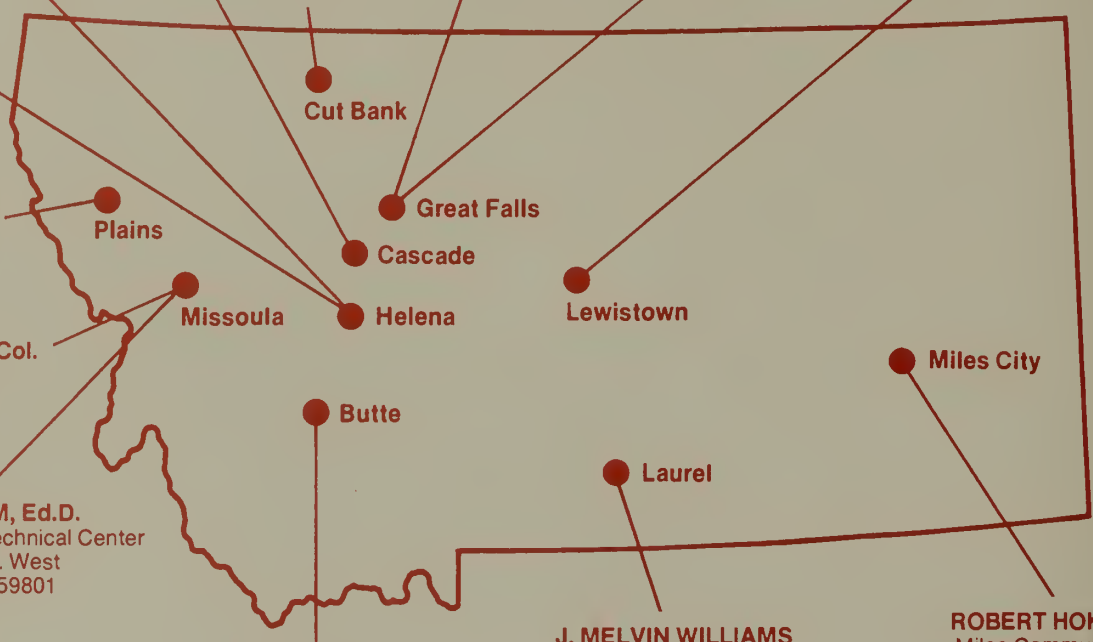

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PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (P.L. 98-524) requires that "the public is given an opportunity to express views concerning the vocational education program of the State." To fulfill this requirement, the Montana Council on Vocational Education conducts a public hearing annually to collect information providing valuable insight on current issues in vocational education. Recommendations provided by those making presentations are a valuable source of topics for Council discussions, research efforts, and recommendations to the State Board of Education.

Public Hearing 1986 was held in conjunction with the Montana Vocational Association State Leadership Conference, at the Rainbow Hotel, Great Falls, Montana, Friday, October 17. Senator George McCallum, Council Chairman, presided at the hearing, extended greetings, and introduced the members of the Council.

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. John P. Anderson
Postsecondary Student
Great Falls

The Honorable Roger Anderson
Mayor, City of Great Falls

Dr. Charles Corrigan
Mt. Council of Local Administrators
Kalispell

Ms. Jane DeLong, Personnel Manager
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Montana
Helena

Mr. Jeff Dietz, Director
Billings Vo-Tech Center

Ms. Peg Ensign, Assistant Manager
Job Service
Great Falls

Mr. Wayne Gilman, President
Montana Vocational Association
Dillon

Mrs. Cindy Luoma, Instructor
Vocational-Agriculture
Fairfield High School

Mr. Joe Mathews, Regional Manager
Dept. of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Great Falls

Mr. Jess McDonald, President
White Inc.
Great Falls

Mr. Robert McIntyre
Board of Trustees, School District No. 1
Great Falls

Mr. Dennis McOmber
Project Fresh Start
Great Falls

Dr. Bill Merwin, President
Northern Montana College
Havre

Mr. Mike Mizenko, Business Manager
Plumbers & Pipefitters Union, Local #139
Great Falls

Mr. Ronald Paulick
Postsecondary Student
Great Falls

Mr. Larry Schulz
School District #5
Kalispell

Mr. Roger Stone, Instructor
Great Falls Vo-Tech Center

Ms. Shawnda Zahara, Secondary Student
Cascade

MONTANANS RESPOND. . .

"Vocational Education — A Cooperative Effort" was the public hearing theme. Participants were presented with four questions prepared by the Council pertaining to cooperative efforts between business/industry and vocational education.

WHAT DOES BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY EXPECT OF ITS EMPLOYEES?

Charles Corrigan

"Business and industry expects that their employees achieve the highest amount of productivity that is possible. Also, I think that the employees have to provide service to the customer through the leadership of the management."

Roger Anderson

"A well trained, frequently updated workforce allows business and industry to grow and prosper."

". . . what business and industry expects is a good work attitude when they come out of secondary high schools, meaning being able to use their time wisely, being productive, productive workers, being prompt, being able to work with people, being able to communicate with people, and more importantly being able to be open minded and willing to learn new skills."

Cindy Luoma

"It seems to be fairly universal in my opinion that industry wants a person that is willing and capable to learn, that is dependable, and will be there every Monday morning ready to work. Second in importance. . . is vocational skills and lastly is general education skills. . ."

Dennis McOmber

". . . business and industry can expect students to be somewhat skilled in their area."

Shawnda Zahara

"They expect employees to focus on results, not activities."

Ronald Paulick

"Business and industry expects its employees to be able to adapt to the business environment in which they are working, to be able to follow the policies and procedures established, and to learn the assigned tasks in reasonable amounts of time. They also expect employees to do creative and logical thinking."

Jane DeLong

Joe Mathews

"They are looking for an ability to learn and ability to respond to change — a good work ethic, someone who can be productive and help that business make money. An ability to read, write, follow instructions."

Peg Ensign

"Our contention with disabled people is they don't need to be treated any differently than anybody else."

WHAT DOES BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY EXPECT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, ITS PROGRAMS, AND ITS PARTICIPANTS?

"Montana's system of postsecondary and secondary vocational education is designed to provide a well-trained workforce for our State's employers and to provide the means for technological updating."

Charles Corrigan

"High Tech is coming in — we need more education."

Mike Mizenko

"By having current and practical programs of study, we are able to train students for employment in a relatively short time with job skills that are in demand. . . Business expects the Vo-Techs to be leaders in technical fields."

Roger Stone and MCVE Members

"I feel that business and industry expects educators to prepare the students in basic skills that might be applied to a variety of vocations."

Shawnda Zahara

"If we are to remain a viable force in the educational system of Montana, we must provide job entry level skills at a proficiency level that sets a person above the ordinary high school graduate who is willing, able and ready to go to work. Business and industry wants a person who is motivated, who doesn't need prodding, and who is a self-starter. So I think there are some other things we need to look at our vocational education other than just the skills. They have got to also have the work ethic and the value in there."

Dennis McOmber

". . . business and industry want programs that keep to the times. . . and they want them when they are changing, not after they are changed."

Ronald Paulick

"Business and industry expects vocational education to be abreast of state-of-the-art changes in industry and adapt their training to involve any changes in automation or business culture."

Jane DeLong

Peg Ensign

"My agency is vocational rehabilitation. We are a State agency providing service to individuals to try to help them overcome disabilities, handicaps to employment, so that they are able to once again become working members of our society. The concept behind this is to make a taxpayer out of a tax user."

Joe Mathews

"Business and industry expects the vocational education to provide programs that are update in their material that they teach so that the students, upon graduation, need minimal training once they hit the job."

". . . the single most important thing that the education can do from the secondary level in my opinion is to provide the basic education of the student from kindergarten through high school. . . . I think overall throughout the State, the present public education system is meeting and providing the needs of vocational education at this time."

Robert McIntyre

". . . Montana needs strong, very strong vocational technical training."

Jeff Dietz

HOW CAN VOCATIONAL AND OTHER EDUCATORS BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY?

Larry Schultz

"Vocational education is not part of Montana's economic problems. Vocational education is part of the solution to Montana's economic future."

Charles Corrigan

". . . I do think it is an exciting time where vocational education can come to the front and make some real positive inroads and help us economically in this state. I am very concerned over the economics of the state and the fact that I think vocational education has to be one of the strong leaders in that behalf."

"Vocational Education must have the funding and flexibility to shift to new programs in short time periods, because the most important thing we can do for business is to stay current. . . . The state in creating the Vo-Tech have created a very flexible and responsive system of education in Montana."

Roger Stone

". . . I feel our survival in vocational education and the stimulation of our economy in Montana is going to be tied to business and industry becoming close partners with vocational education. . . . Business and industry has to have a keen ear to what is happening in the high school and I don't think in all cases they do — they don't understand there are more requirements now so there are fewer people going into vocational programs and being trained for their jobs."

Cindy Luoma

". . . they should have closer communication, and contact with the employers such as using former students who have completed programs in vocational areas come back and speak on what they are doing at the present time in their business. They should be informed of trends and tendencies of industry, keep them up-to-date and use applicable materials and ideas. They must give accurate and unbiased materials and information so students will have a realistic idea of what is possible."

Shawnda Zahara

"I think it is important to keep abreast of the trends and train future employees on current model equipment so they are familiar with the tools of industry today and not theory of a few years ago. . ."

Dennis McOmber

"Allow Vo-Tech Centers to explore and respond to the needs of a community's, state's, or region's business needs."

Ronald Paulick

"It seems there has to be a mutual participation and understanding between business and educators in order to meet the challenge of satisfying everyone's needs. Some suggestions for participation together would be, educators and business people share ideas together on-site with personal visits and involvement in each others organizations, either as members, speakers, or guests."

Jane DeLong

"Educators need to know what occupations will be in demand for future needs of businesses. They need to be able to change their curriculum to what will be in demand."

Peg Ensign

"We look to the Vo-Techs to provide much of the training that a lot of our folks are able to do and you have to remember that we are talking here about people who have some real barriers to employment in many cases."

Joe Mathews

Robert McIntyre

"One of the concerns I think we have is we don't get locked into a curriculum of programs or classes on the secondary level that can't change to meet current needs and lose their relevance to the work place."

"... as the public school system increases their curriculum requirement and basic skills and as more mandatory skills are imposed, there are fewer and fewer electives available and therefore fewer and fewer students are going into vocational education and the irony of this is that at the very hour that we need the best students..."

Bill Merwin

HOW CAN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSIST VOCATIONAL AND OTHER EDUCATORS TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF SATISFYING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY'S NEEDS?

"I and others urge you to make rules that help business and Vo-Techs to work together rather than laws that make it more difficult."

Roger Stone

". . . allowing working relationships to be established between them."

Ronald Paulick

"Business needs to use the local educators more in their training courses."

Jane Delong

MCVE Members

". . . they can help bring in equipment and technology. . . into our classrooms that public schools can't afford. . . I think industry would do it if we would just involve them and make them a participant in our vocational training. They have to be made to realize that as a vocational program, we are training students that are going to be going into their field. They are going to be their employees."

Cindy Luoma

"I feel they should give opportunities for educators to become informed of the needs of business and industry such as giving seminars and workshops frequently, and they should show an interest in what is happening in the educational system. . . . Business and industry can assist educators also by playing an advisory role."

Shawnda Zahara

"One of the best ways is to provide job environment stations which become a part of the students total curriculum. It is important to let legislators know the value of these schools to the business community. Most of the future work force training needs can be met by our technical schools who can adapt and keep pace."

Dennis McOmber

". . . one of the things that I think could really utilize some improvement and work is placement activities. It is not enough, at least for our disabled population, to go through a program and maybe make it through that program and receive a certificate and then sit at home."

Joe Mathews

"I think the overall goal of creating a better trained work force is very important, creating more bureaucracy is not. So I strongly support the use of the existing programs and strengthening the present programs without creating any more."

Robert McIntyre

FINDINGS

Following a review of testimony provided by participants, the Council has "gleaned" the following main points:

- Employers desire productive employees that are dependable, competent, willing to learn, and have good work attitudes.
- Vocational and other educators need to ensure students have a sound foundation in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics.
- There is a need for increased business and industry/education partnerships.
- Vocational education personnel and curriculum must be kept up-to-date in their occupational areas and be involved with business and industry in their communities.
- Montana must develop new responses to the technological advances revolutionizing the workplace. Vocational education delivery systems within Montana will require greater flexibility than now exists in order to meet those demands.
- There is need for articulation between **all** secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs and institutions.
- Increased opportunities for adults in need of training or retraining must be expanded at all levels of vocational education within Montana.

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